DEVIANCE SERIES
PROPHETIC GUIDANCE - 1

The Prophet MUHAMMAD'S صلى الله عليه وآله وسلم ETHICS *of* WAR



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In the name of Allah, the Most Compassionate, the Ever-Merciful

A Caution Against Indiscriminate Murder

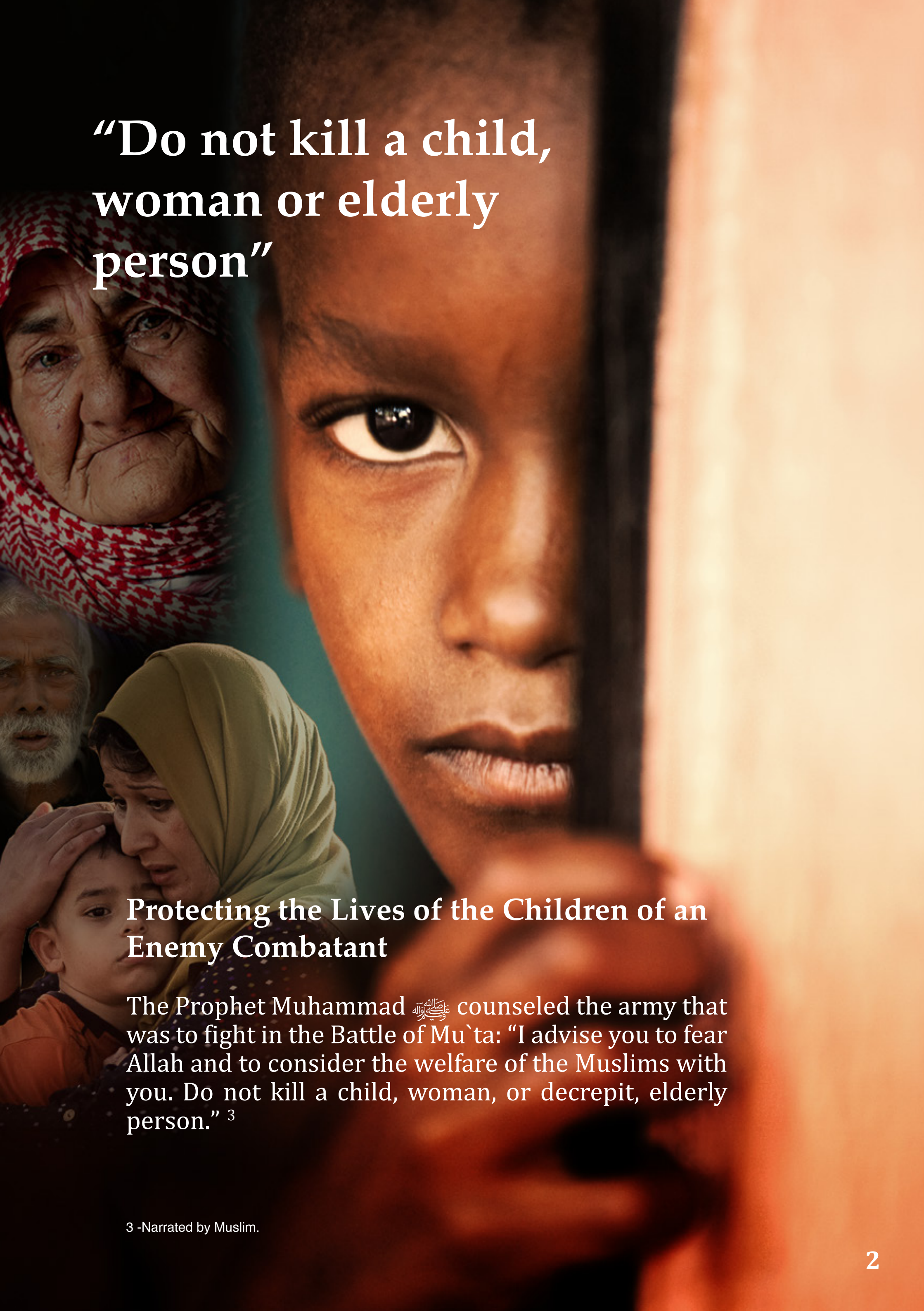
Ibn 'Abbas related that a man asked him about someone who kills a Muslim deliberately. He replied: "'If anyone kills a believer deliberately, the punishment for him is Hell, and there he will remain: God is angry with him, and rejects him, and has prepared a tremendous torment for him.' This was among the last verses to be revealed. There was no abrogation of this verse upto the Prophet's passing —and there is no revelation after the Messenger of Allah ﷺ." The man asked, "What if [the killer] repented, believed, did righteous deeds, and was guided [towards truth]?" Ibn 'Abbas said, "How can there be repentance for him when I heard the Messenger of Allah ﷺ say, 'May his mother be bereft of him—the person who kills another deliberately. [The slain] will bring his killer on the Day of Resurrection with his right or left hand and his head in his right or left hand, and with his jugular veins flowing with blood, until he draws near the Throne, and will say, 'O Lord, ask Your slave why he killed me.''" [1]

Remaining Faithful to Covenants Enacted with Enemy Combatants

This was a matter of great importance to the Prophet Muhammad ﷺ. He declared himself free of those who are treacherous, even if the treacherous one was a Muslim, and even if the one betrayed was a non-Muslim. The Prophet ﷺ said, "If anyone offers a man security and then kills him, I absolve myself of the killer even if the person killed is a non-believer ".[2]



1 - Its chain of narration is sound. Imam Ahmad narrated it in his Musnad.
2 -Bukhari in at-Tarikh al-Kabir 3/322 (this is his wording), ibn Hibban (5982), Bazzar (2308).



"Do not kill a child, woman or elderly person"

Protecting the Lives of the Children of an Enemy Combatant

The Prophet Muhammad ﷺ counseled the army that was to fight in the Battle of Mu`ta: "I advise you to fear Allah and to consider the welfare of the Muslims with you. Do not kill a child, woman, or decrepit, elderly person." [3]

3 -Narrated by Muslim.



“Do not kill a monk”

“Their places of worship should not be demolished”

Concern for the Religious Well-Being of Others

The Prophet ﷺ said: “Do not kill a person who dwells in a sacred sanctuary.”[4] He also counselled: “Do not kill a monk”[5] nor “should their places of worship be demolished.”[6]

4 - Narrated by Muslim.

5 - Narrated by Bayhaqi in his Sunan.

6 - The Messenger of Allah (peace and blessings be upon him) made a treaty of protection for the people of Najran that their places of worship not be demolished. Narrated by Abu Dawud in his Sunan.

“Do not destroy a building”



Build and Develop — Not Destroy and Devastate

The Prophet ﷺ said, “Do not [cut] palm trees; do not cut down trees; and do not destroy a building.”
And he ﷺ said, “Do not slaughter a camel or cow except for food. Do not drown bees or burn them.”[7]

7 -Narrated by Bayhaqi in his Sunan al-Kubra (17904).

Consideration for Animals

While marching through a valley on the way to Makkah, the Prophet صلى الله عليه وآله saw a female dog visibly frightened by the great numbers of people coming towards her such that she snarled over her pups protectively as they fed from her. He commanded a man from his Companions, Juayl ibn Suraqa, to stand guard over the mother dog so that no one from the army would disturb her and her young.[8]

8 - Maghazi of Waqidi (p. 804).



Prohibition on Mutilation

Imran ibn al-Husayn said, “The Prophet ﷺ never stood to give us a sermon except that he commanded us to give charity and forbade us from mutilation.”[9]

Just Treatment of Prisoners of War

Allah, Most Exalted, says of the righteous: “They give food, for love of (God), to the poor, the orphan, and the captive.”[10]
The Prophet ﷺ said: “I enjoin you to treat prisoners of war well.”[11]

9 -Narrated by Ahmad and Abu Dawud.

10 - [al-Insan:8]

11 - From a narration reported by Tabarani with a good chain of transmission.

“I enjoin you to treat prisoners of war well”



Pardon, Forgiveness Over Revenge

The Prophet ﷺ did not only forgive individuals, he pardoned entire tribes. One of the most well-known stances of the Prophet ﷺ is his saying, during the conquest of Makkah, to those who fought him for 20 years: "O people of the Quraysh! What do you think I will do with you?" They replied, “We think (you will treat us) well, noble brother, son of a noble brother.” He said, “Go, for you are free.”.[12]

“Go, for you are free”



12 - Ibn Hisham: as-Sira an-Nabawiyya 2/411, and ibn Hajar: Fath al-Bari 8/18.

Summary

This selection of counsels from the Prophet ﷺ provide guidance that applies in times of peace as much as war. They expose the fallacies and illegitimacy of the acts perpetrated by groups falsely acting in the name of Islam. Their attacks against human life through drownings, burnings, undue killings and destruction of property and society completely contradict the counsels of the Prophet Muhammad, peace be upon him.

They outrightly misrepresent the guidance that the Prophet, ﷺ, imparted to the army of the Battle of Mu'ta: "I advise you to fear Allah and to consider the welfare of the Muslims with you. Do not act treacherously. Do not steal from the spoils of war. Do not kill a newborn, woman, decrepit person or a person in a sacred sanctuary. Do not [cut] palm trees. Do not cut down trees. Do not destroy a building."[13]

Allah's Messenger ﷺ also said, "Do not kill a child, woman, aged person, sick person or monk. Do not cut down fruit-bearing trees. Do not destroy an inhabited place. Do not slaughter a camel or cow except for food. Do not drown bees or burn them."[14]

- "Do not kill a child, woman, decrepit person or sick person."
- "Do not kill a person in a sacred sanctuary or a monk. Do not demolish a temple."
- "Do not make for palm trees. Do not cut trees. Do not cut down fruit-bearing trees."
- "Do not destroy a building. Do not destroy an inhabited place."
- "Do not slaughter a camel or cow except for food."
- "Do not drown bees or burn them."
- "Do not act treacherously. Do not mutilate. Do not steal from the spoils of war."
- "I enjoin you to treat prisoners of war well."



13 - al-Sunan al-Kubra of Bayhaqi volume 9, page 69, and Subul al-Huda wa'l-Rashad volume 6, page 146.
14 - Bayhaqi narrated it in as-Sunan.

INTRODUCING THE DEVIANCE SERIES

The Messenger of God, ﷺ, said:
'This knowledge will be transmitted from every generation by its upright; they negate from it the distortions of the extreme, the false claims of the falsifiers, and interpretations of the ignorant.'

Some of those that possess misapprehensions have understood the discourse of God in a manner which does not agree with the academic methodology inherited from the pious predecessors (*al-salaf al-ṣāliḥ*), and does not harmonize with the objectives and greater values of the divine revelation…

They have taken some verses of the noble Qur᾿ān which were revealed in regard to the non-Muslims, and made them applicable to the Muslims… They have adopted verses which came as exceptions and applied to them general rulings…

They have distorted the meanings of the words of God in a manner that has led to the establishment or formation of grave erroneous concepts within the minds of the general Muslim populace, a result of which are mannerisms and actions that have no correlation with the true intrinsic religion of Islam…

We shall become acquainted through the parts of this continuous series about the distortions of the meanings of the verses of the Noble Qur᾿ān and the Prophetic traditions (*hadith*) which the adherents of these distorted ideas have fallen within, their misguidance concerning legal rulings, and their embracing of wrong conceptions. All of which distanced them from God's intended meanings, as well as His Prophet's ﷺ and the righteous predecessors (*salaf al-ṣālih*) that followed.



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